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## Connecticut governor seeks rail funds

Written by

**The Associated Press**

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HARTFORD, Conn. -- Gov. Dannel P. Malloy on Thursday urged officials in Washington to award the state at least \$100 million in federal rail funding that Florida's governor has rejected.

The money would help fund the planned commuter rail line from New Haven to Springfield, Mass., and eventually up through Vermont and to Montreal.

In a conference call with reporters, Malloy said he met with Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood and made the point that Connecticut, unlike other states, is financially committed to the rail. The state has already earmarked \$286 million for the projected \$800 million line.

"In my administration, we have an administration that is very serious about getting these projects done and executed, and I will push the monies to be spent in a timely fashion," Malloy said. "Our state is willing to put in more money than most other states do in these types of projects."

Florida Gov. Rick Scott recently declined \$2.4 billion in federal funding for a

proposed high-speed rail line between Tampa and Orlando. Scott has said he feared Florida could be stuck with billions of potential cost overruns and operating losses.

Malloy said Connecticut has no option but to invest in the rail line.

"We've had 22 years of no job growth. We need to bring this rail connection back. I think this corridor represents substantial development opportunities," he said, adding how educational, research and manufacturing opportunities could be linked.

It's unclear when Connecticut might learn whether it will receive any of the federal funds rejected by Florida.

Meanwhile, Malloy said he's now confident that \$40 million in federal funds allocated to Connecticut to double-track 10 miles of the rail line between Newington and New Britain will be released before a crucial April 8 deadline.

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Malloy said money had not been released to the state because agreements between Amtrak, the federal Department of Transportation and the state were not yet finalized. If the money is not issued to Connecticut by April 8, it could be reallocated to other states, he said.

Malloy said he has met with LaHood four times since becoming governor in January. The new Democratic governor has made it clear that he intends to spend time in Washington, attempting to lobby for more federal funding for Connecticut.

He also met Friday morning with Vice President Joe Biden.

Malloy was scheduled to attend a St. Patrick's Day event at the White House with President Barack Obama. He also had meetings planned with his new Washington office director, Connecticut Sen. Joe Lieberman, the Democratic Governors Association and "some business interests" that Malloy hopes might bring jobs to Connecticut.

Malloy said he also planned to meet with Illinois Gov. Pat Quinn, a fellow Democrat, to "talk about some issues of common interest."

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